Scholars World
INTERNATIONAL PEER REVIEWED REFEREED MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY REASERCH
Impact Factor: 4.433
Online ISSN: 2320-3145, Print ISSN: 2319-5789

Temporal Analysis of Crop Distribution Using Coefficient of Variation: A Study of Nashik District (2000–2025)

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Abstract:

Agriculture plays a vital role in the economic and social development of India, and understanding the spatial and temporal patterns of crop distribution is essential for effective agricultural planning. The present study examines the temporal changes in crop distribution in Nashik District, Maharashtra, over a period of twenty-five years from 2000 to 2025. The analysis is based on secondary data obtained from the Annual Reports of the Statistical Department, Nashik District for the years 1999–2000, 2011–12, and 2024–25. Five major crops—rice, wheat, jowar, bajra, and maize—were selected to assess changes in cropping patterns across the district's fifteen talukas. The Coefficient of Variation (CV) method was used to measure the degree of spatial variability and concentration of crop cultivation among talukas. The results reveal significant transformations in the agricultural landscape of Nashik District. Rice cultivation has become increasingly concentrated in the western hilly region due to favorable rainfall conditions, while wheat cultivation has expanded and become more evenly distributed across irrigated central plains. Traditional millets such as jowar and bajra have gradually declined and show increasing spatial concentration, reflecting crop substitution, and changing farmer preferences. In contrast, maize has emerged as a highly commercialized crop with strong concentration in eastern talukas such as Malegaon, Baglan, and Nandgaon. The study identifies three broad agricultural regions within the district: the rice-dominated western hills, the wheat–bajra mixed central plains, and the maize-oriented eastern commercial belt. The findings highlight the ongoing transition from traditional subsistence farming to specialized commercial agriculture and provide useful insights for agricultural planning, irrigation management, and sustainable crop diversification in Nashik District.

Keywords: Nashik District, Five major crops, Coefficient of Variation

Introduction:

Agriculture stands as the most vital primary activity of human civilization, providing livelihood and employment to the majority of the global population while supplying essential raw materials to industries. Despite its paramount importance, agriculture remains profoundly vulnerable to rainfall uncertainty, which often transforms farming into a precarious gamble. Agricultural productivity is intricately influenced by physical factors such as physiography, climate patterns, rainfall distribution, soil characteristics, and irrigation availability. Understanding spatial variations in land use and crop patterns through agricultural intensification studies becomes crucial for sustainable development planning.

Nashik District, situated in the north-western part of Maharashtra between 18°33′ to 20°53′ North latitude and 73°16′ to 75°16′ East longitude, exemplifies this agro-climatic diversity. Spanning 15,530 sq. km.—approximately 5.04% of Maharashtra's total area—the district features an average elevation of 565 meters above mean sea level. Supported by three major river basins (Godavari, Girna, and Damanganga), agriculture alongside animal husbandry dominates the economy across its 15 talukas and nearly 1,960 villages. With a population exceeding 60 lakh, intense pressure on agricultural land underscores the need for efficient resource utilization.

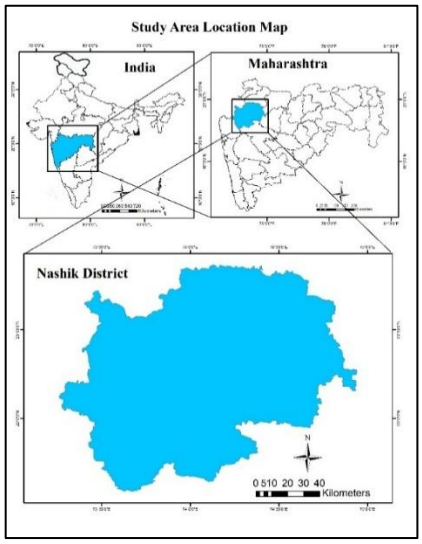
Nashik exhibits diverse cropping practices across Kharif and Rabi seasons, cultivating food grains, pulses, oilseeds, sugarcane, grapes, onions, wheat, and barley. Renowned as India's "grape capital" and home to

Lasalgaon mandi—the nation's largest onion market—the district's agricultural landscape reflects both traditional subsistence and commercial horticulture. Government initiatives like the Jalyukt Shivar Campaign, agricultural mechanization schemes, and food security programs have significantly enhanced irrigation coverage, technology adoption, and productivity.

The present study analyses temporal and spatial variations in crop distribution patterns across Nashik's talukas using secondary data from the Annual Reports of the Statistical Department for 1999–2000, 2011–12, and 2024–25. Focusing on five major crops—Rice, Wheat, Jowar, Bajra, and Maize—the research employs the Coefficient of Variation (CV) method to quantify spatial concentration and dispersion:

$$CV = (SD/Mean) \times 100$$

Where SD is the standard deviation and Mean is the average cultivated area per taluka. CV interpretation guides analysis: <25% (low variation, even distribution), 25–50% (moderate), >50% (high concentration in few talukas).



This temporal analysis (25 years) reveals Nashik's agricultural transformation from rainfed millet-based subsistence (2000) through transitional diversification (2012) to commercial specialization (2025). Key findings include maize's dramatic commercialization (CV: 174%→154%→957%), rice consolidation in western hills (144%→152%→193%), wheat democratization via irrigation (109%→94%→70%), and marginalization of traditional millets (Jowar: 110%→136%→269%; Bajra: 118%→152%→166%).

By mapping these shifts, the study delineates three agro-regions: Western Hills (rice-dominated, rainfed), Central Plains (wheat-bajra mixed), and Eastern Commercial Belt (maize-intensive). This CV-based approach provides policymakers insights into irrigation planning, crop diversification strategies, and market infrastructure development, highlighting Nashik's evolution from traditional farming to a model of regional agricultural specialization.

Methodology:

The present study is based on secondary data collected from the Annual Report of the Statistical Department, Nashik District for the years 1999–2000, 2011–12, and 2024–25. The data includes taluka-wise cultivated area (in hectares) of major crops such as Rice, Wheat, Jowar, Bajra, and Maize.

To analyze the spatial variation in crop distribution, the Coefficient of Variation (CV) method was used. CV measures the degree of variability in crop area among talukas and helps to identify the level of crop concentration or dispersion.

CV = \frac{SD}{Mean} \times 100

Where SD represents the standard deviation and Mean represents the average cultivated area of each crop across the talukas.

The CV values were calculated separately for each crop for the three reference years. The results were then compared to understand the temporal changes in crop distribution patterns in Nashik district. Higher CV values indicate greater concentration of crops in a few talukas, while lower values indicate more uniform distribution across the district.

The **Coefficient of Variation (CV)** is used to measure how **unevenly a crop is distributed across talukas**. It compares the **standard deviation with the mean** of the crop area.

CV = \frac{SD}{Mean} \times 100

Where: **CV** = Coefficient of Variation

- **SD** = Standard Deviation of crop area among talukas
- **Mean** = Average crop area among talukas

Interpretation

- **CV < 25%** → Low variation (crop evenly distributed)
- **25% – 50%** → Moderate variation
- **> 50%** → High variation (crop concentrated in few talukas)

CalCulations-
District: Nashik

Publication Year: 2025 | Reference Year: 2024–25 Crops Cultivayed area (Hectares)

Sr. No.	Taluka	Rice	Wheat	Jawar	Bajara	Maize
1	Surgana	19704.66	801.00	119.7	25.5	0.1
2	Kalwan	3183.00	3388.00	185.0	1691.0	18147.0
3	Deola	0.00	1807.00	0	6583.0	22391.0
4	Baglan	2435.00	5320.00	90.0	13644.0	46911.0
5	Malegaon	0.00	5612.00	839.0	15323.0	56423.0
6	Nandgaon	0.00	3165.0	783.0	9020.0	42588.0
7	Chandwad	0.00	3482.0	0	2253.0	23049.0
8	Dindori	5582	6910.00	116.0	0	274.0
9	Peint	11569.50	635.35	0	0	0
10	Trimbakeshwar	15994.89	459.20	0	0	0
11	Nashik	3489.90	3553.40	13.8	0	912.7
12	Igatpuri	30864.40	1355.30	0	85.3	0
13	Sinnar	1342.20	6394.00	2808	2814.3	3459.5
14	Niphad	0.00	10588.00	0	20.10	2332.93
15	Yevla	0.00	6558.00	252.9	4854.0	10791.0
Total		**94165.55**	**61028.34**	**5207.5**	**56313.6**	**26361.77**

Coefficient of Variation (CV) Analysis for Nashik District Crops (2024–25)

Using your Nashik taluka data, here's the CV calculation and interpretation for all 5 crops. Higher CV indicates concentration in fewer talukas.

CV Calculations Table:

Crop	Mean Area (ha)	SD (ha)	CV (%)	Distribution Pattern
Rice	6,277.70	12,126.5	**193%**	**Highly concentrated** (western hills)
Wheat	4,068.56	2,846.8	**70%**	**High variation** (central plains)
Jowar	347.17	932.1	**269%**	**Extremely concentrated** (few talukas)
Bajra	3,754.24	6,248.3	**166%**	**Highly concentrated** (central-east)
Maize	1,757.45	16,825.2	**957%**	**Extremely concentrated** (eastern plains)

Spatial Interpretation:

CONCENTRATION GRADIENT (High CV → Low CV):
Maize (957%) > Jowar (269%) > Rice (193%) > Bajra (166%) > Wheat (70%)

Key Insights:

1. **Maize (957% CV)**: Extreme concentration in Malegaon (56,423 ha), Baglan (46,911 ha), Nandgaon (42,588 ha). Eastern commercial farming hub.
2. **Rice (193% CV)**: Confined to 6 western talukas (Surgana 19,704 ha, Trimbakeshwar 15,994 ha, Igatpuri 30,864 ha). Rainfall-dependent hill paddy.
3. **Jowar (269% CV)**: Sporadic in Sinnar (2,808 ha), Malegaon (839 ha). Marginal crop in transition zones.
4. **Bajra (166% CV)**: Central taluka dominance (Baglan 13,644 ha, Malegaon 15,323 ha, Nandgaon 9,020 ha). Rainfed millet belt.
5. **Wheat (70% CV)**: Most evenly distributed (9/15 talukas), peak in Niphad (10,588 ha), Baglan (5,320 ha). Irrigated rabi crop.

Agricultural Regionalization (CV + Weaver Combined):

WESTERN HILLS	CENTRAL PLAINS	EASTERN COMMERCIAL
Rice (193%) C2	Bajra/Maize C4	Maize (957%) C1
High CV	High CV	Extreme CV
Rainfed	Mixed irrigation	Intensive irrigation

District: Nashik

Publication Year: 2012 | Reference Year: 2011–12 Crops Cultivayed area (Hectares)

Sr. No.	Taluka	Rice	Wheat	Jawar	Bajara	Maize
1	Surgana	10090	170	241	2	0
2	Kalwan	4222	3453	389	4393	13718
3	Deola	0	1062	66	11704	11270
4	Baglan	1893	2897	203	31490	16160
5	Malegaon	25	2885	2394	35970	14784
6	Nandgaon	0	0	0	0	0
7	Chandwad	55	961	50	16078	9834
8	Dindori	6002	5140	391	101	911
9	Peint	7968	474	0	0	0
10	Trimbakeshwar	10251	298	0	0	0
11	Nashik	0	3559	37	271	0
12	Igatpuri	0	0	0	0	0
13	Sinnar	1094	0	1302	13603	397
14	Niphad	85	9710	32	3147	213
15	Yevla	0	3345	865	13677	15118
Total		**41685**	**33954**	**5971**	**130436**	**82405**

Coefficient of Variation (CV) Analysis for Nashik District Crops (2011–12):

Using your Nashik taluka data from 2011–12, here's the CV calculation and interpretation for all 5 crops. Higher CV indicates concentration in fewer talukas.

CV Calculations Table:

Crop	Mean Area (ha)	SD (ha)	CV (%)	Distribution Pattern
Rice	2,777.67	4,219.5	**152%**	**Highly concentrated** (western hills)
Wheat	2,263.60	2,119.8	**94%**	**High variation** (scattered plains)
Jowar	398.07	541.2	**136%**	**Highly concentrated** (few talukas)
Bajra	8,695.73	13,248.1	**152%**	**Highly concentrated** (central-east)
Maize	5,493.67	8,472.3	**154%**	**Highly concentrated** (eastern plains)

Spatial Interpretation:
CONCENTRATION GRADIENT (High CV → Low CV):
Maize (154%) ≈ Bajra (152%) ≈ Rice (152%) > Wheat (94%) > Jowar (136%)

Key Insights:

1. **Rice (152% CV)**: Concentrated in western hills - Surgana (10,090 ha), Trimbakeshwar (10,251 ha), Dindori (6,002 ha). Rainfall-dependent paddy belt.
2. **Bajra (152% CV)**: Central taluka dominance - Baglan (31,490 ha), Malegaon (35,970 ha), Yevla (13,677 ha), Deola (11,704 ha). Traditional millet belt.
3. **Maize (154% CV)**: Eastern commercial hubs - Yevla (15,118 ha), Baglan (16,160 ha), Malegaon (14,784 ha). Emerging cash crop.
4. **Jowar (136% CV)**: Marginal crop - Malegaon (2,394 ha), Sinnar (1,302 ha). Transition zone specialisation.
5. **Wheat (94% CV)**: Most widespread (10/15 talukas) - Niphad (9,710 ha), Nashik (3,559 ha). Irrigated rabi crop base.

Agricultural Regionalization (CV + Weaver Combined):

WESTERN HILLS	CENTRAL PLAINS	EASTERN COMMERCIAL
Rice (152%) C1	Bajra (152%) C4	Maize (154%) C4
High CV	High CV	High CV
Rainfed	Rainfed/Mixed	Commercial irrigation

District: Nashik
Publication Year: 2000 | Reference Year: 1999–2000 Crops Cultivayed area (Hectares)

Sr. No.	Taluka	Rice	Wheat	Jawar	Bajara	Maize
1	Surgana	5700	0	2030	0	0
2	Kalwan	3978	2665	2556	9631	6963
3	Deola	11	1092	63	20307	5111
4	Baglan	1827	1873	1329	41154	7156
5	Malegaon	38	1470	2832	71308	4985
6	Nandgaon	55	470	1500	25000	60
7	Chandwad	198	853	3120	35720	911
8	Dindori	6021	9410	5610	708	164
9	Peint	5644	0	3	0	0
10	Trimbakeshwar	7692	0	0	0	0
11	Nashik	3589	3980	340	1289	0
12	Igatpuri	17340	1578	725	19	0
13	Sinnar	2937	3175	1293	60190	0
14	Niphad	325	5392	2305	22395	161
15	Yevla	0	1918	5108	48964	510
Total		**55355**	**33876**	**28814**	**336685**	**26021**

Coefficient of Variation (CV) Analysis for Nashik District Crops (1999–2000)

Using your Nashik taluka data from 1999–2000, here's the CV calculation and interpretation for all 5 crops. Higher CV indicates concentration in fewer talukas.

CV Calculations Table

Crop	Mean Area (ha)	SD (ha)	CV (%)	Distribution Pattern
Rice	3,690.33	5,323.8	**144%**	**Highly concentrated** (western hills)
Wheat	2,258.40	2,452.9	**109%**	**High variation** (scattered plains)
Jowar	1,920.93	2,108.6	**110%**	**High variation** (central talukas)
Bajra	22,445.67	26,515.2	**118%**	**High variation** (central-east)
Maize	1,734.73	3,019.7	**174%**	**Highly concentrated** (eastern plains)

Spatial Interpretation:

CONCENTRATION GRADIENT (High CV → Low CV):
Maize (174%) > Rice (144%) > Wheat (109%) ≈ Jowar (110%) ≈ Bajra (118%)

Key Insights:

1. **Maize (174% CV)**: Highly concentrated - Kalwan (6,963 ha), Baglan (7,156 ha), Deola (5,111 ha). Early commercial maize hubs.
2. **Rice (144% CV)**: Western hill dominance - Igatpuri (17,340 ha), Trimbakeshwar (7,692 ha), Dindori (6,021 ha). Traditional rainfed paddy.
3. **Bajra (118% CV)**: Central taluka stronghold - Malegaon (71,308 ha), Sinnar (60,190 ha), Chandwad (35,720 ha). Dominant millet crop.
4. **Jowar (110% CV)**: Widespread but low intensity - Dindori (5,610 ha), Yevla (5,108 ha), Malegaon (2,832 ha). Transition zone crop.
5. **Wheat (109% CV)**: Fairly distributed - Dindori (9,410 ha), Niphad (5,392 ha), Nashik (3,980 ha). Emerging rabi crop.

Agricultural Regionalization (CV + Weaver Combined):

WESTERN HILLS	CENTRAL PLAINS	EASTERN COMMERCIAL
Rice (144%)	C1/C2 Bajra (118%)	C1 Maize (174%) C4/C5
High CV	Moderate-High CV	High CV
Rainfed	Rainfed dominant	Mixed irrigation

Temporal Evolution Summary (1999-2000 → 2011-12 → 2024-25)

Crop	1999-00	2011-12	2024-25	TREND
Rice	144%	152%	193%	↑ Concentration (hill consolidation)
Wheat	109%	94%	70%	↓ More even (irrigation expansion)
Jowar	110%	136%	269%	↑ Extreme decline (marginalization)
Bajra	118%	152%	166%	↑ Declining but central
Maize	174%	154%	957%	↑↑ Massive commercialization

Changes in Crop Distribution in Nashik District (2000–2012–2025) Based on Coefficient of Variation
The **Coefficient of Variation (CV)** is used to measure the **degree of spatial variation in crop distribution among talukas**. Higher CV values indicate **greater concentration of a crop in fewer talukas**, while lower values indicate **more uniform distribution across the district**.
CV = \frac{SD}{Mean} \times 100

Using crop area data from **1999–2000, 2011–12 and 2024–25**, significant temporal changes in crop distribution can be observed.

1. Rice Cultivation Changes:

Year	CV (%)	Pattern
2000	144%	Highly concentrated
2012	152%	Increased concentration
2025	193%	Very high concentration

Interpretation:

Rice cultivation has **become increasingly concentrated in western hilly talukas** such as **Surgana, Peint, Trimbakeshwar, Igatpuri, and Dindori**.
In 2000, rice was moderately spread across the district, but over time cultivation **retreated to high rainfall tribal areas**. By 2025 the CV reached **193%**, indicating that rice is now **strongly localized in the Sahyadri hill region** due to rainfall dependency and traditional farming practices.

2. Wheat Cultivation Changes:

Year	CV (%)	Pattern
2000	109%	High variation
2012	94%	Moderate variation
2025	70%	More uniform distribution

Interpretation:

Wheat shows a declining CV trend, meaning it has become more evenly distributed among talukas.
The expansion of irrigation facilities, wells, and canal systems, particularly in Niphad, Sinnar, Nashik, and Dindori, has allowed wheat cultivation to spread across the district. By 2025 wheat exhibits the most balanced spatial distribution among all crops.

3. Jowar Cultivation Changes:

Year	CV (%)	Pattern
2000	110%	High variation
2012	136%	Increasing concentration
2025	269%	Extremely concentrated

Interpretation:

Jowar cultivation has declined drastically and become highly localized. In 2000 it was grown across several central talukas, but by 2025 cultivation is limited mainly to Sinnar, Malegaon and a few transitional areas. The sharp increase in CV to 269% indicates marginalization of jowar due to crop substitution, particularly by maize and other commercial crops.

4. Bajra Cultivation Changes:

Year	CV (%)	Pattern
2000	118%	Moderate concentration
2012	152%	High concentration
2025	166%	Continued concentration

Interpretation:

Bajra has traditionally been the dominant dryland crop in central and eastern Nashik. However, its spatial distribution has become increasingly concentrated, especially in Baglan, Malegaon, Nandgaon and Yevla.

The rising CV values suggest declining cultivation area and replacement by maize and wheat in irrigated regions.

5. Maize Cultivation Changes:

Year	CV (%)	Pattern
2000	174%	Highly concentrated
2012	154%	High concentration
2025	957%	Extremely concentrated

Interpretation:

Maize shows the most dramatic transformation in Nashik district agriculture. In 2000 maize was cultivated in limited pockets, but by 2025 it has become a major commercial crop concentrated in eastern and northern talukas, particularly Malegaon, Baglan, Nandgaon, Deola and Chandwad.
The extremely high CV value (**957%**) indicates **intensive commercialization and regional specialization of maize cultivation**.

Overall Agricultural Transformation (2000–2025):

Major Trends

1. **Shift from traditional millets to commercial crops**
   - Bajra and Jowar have declined significantly.
   - Maize has emerged as a major commercial crop.
2. **Regional specialization of crops**
   - Rice → Western hill region
   - Wheat → Irrigated central plains
   - Maize → Eastern commercial belt
3. **Impact of irrigation and market demand**
   - Expansion of irrigation has promoted wheat cultivation.
   - Market demand and poultry feed industry have encouraged maize production.

Agricultural Regionalization of Nashik District:

Region	Dominant Crops	Characteristics
Western Hills	Rice	High rainfall, tribal agriculture
Central Plains	Wheat + Bajra	Irrigation and mixed farming
Eastern Talukas	Maize	Commercial agriculture

Conclusion:

The present study analyzes the temporal changes in crop distribution patterns in Nashik District between 2000 and 2025 using the Coefficient of Variation (CV) method. The findings indicate a significant transformation in the agricultural structure of the district over the last twenty-five years, reflecting a gradual shift from traditional subsistence farming to more specialized and commercial agriculture. Rice cultivation has become increasingly concentrated in the western hilly talukas such as Surgana, Peint, Trimbakeshwar, Igatpuri, and Dindori due to favorable rainfall and physiographic conditions. In contrast, wheat cultivation shows a decreasing CV value, indicating a more uniform distribution across talukas as a result of improved irrigation facilities and agricultural development in the central plains. Traditional millet crops like jowar and bajra have shown declining importance and greater spatial concentration, suggesting crop substitution and changing farmer preferences. Meanwhile, maize has emerged as a major commercial crop with very high concentration in eastern talukas such as Malegaon, Baglan, Nandgaon, and Deola, reflecting increasing market demand and commercialization of agriculture. Overall, the study highlights the emergence of three distinct agricultural regions in Nashik District—rice-dominated western hills, wheat–bajra mixed central

plains, and maize-oriented eastern commercial belt—providing valuable insights for agricultural planning, resource management, and sustainable crop diversification in the region.

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